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DANIELS DISCUSSES ACTION OF U. S. IN HANDLING THE WIRELESS

War Regulations Adopted; Station at Pearl Harbor Soon to Be Built

The action of the United States navy in taking charge of all radio stations of the country when the war broke out is discussed in the annual report of Secretary Daniels of the department, just made public. In the discussion of navy wireless work, the statement is also made that the big wireless station for Pearl Harbor is soon to be built.

The report says: "The president recently signally honored the navy by intrusting to this department the enforcement of the executive order of August 5, which was necessary to prevent radio stations under the jurisdiction of the United States becoming the instrument through which unneutral messages were sent to vessels at sea or to other radio stations. At the outbreak of the European war it developed that no precedent existed which related to the use of radio stations by persons within the limits of neutral countries during continuance of hostilities. The president, in pursuance of his neutrality proclamations intrusted to the navy department the duty of acting as censor of radio communications. This work has been done without friction or injury to commercial business. It became necessary for the government to take over the radio station at Tuckerton, N. J. Its ownership was in dispute, it had no license to operate under the radio act, and its control by the government was required to meet a real demand for its use for unneutral messages.

The primary purpose of the naval radio establishment is a purely military one, and this has been emphasized by events in connection with our occupation of Vera Cruz and still more forcibly during the progress of the war in Europe; and while this feature of our equipment is one in which the naval service alone is directly interested, it is a matter of scant knowledge how great a part the naval radio establishment plays in everyday commercial life. An idea of this may be had from the statement that we have opened 25 stations to commercial business, and that every ship of the navy is herself a commercial station, as all private messages handled are paid for by the senders. During the war in Mexico, when all land wire and cable communication between the United States and the southern part of Mexico was interrupted, the naval vessels on the west coast afforded the only means of quick commercial communication and soon began to handle a large business.

In addition to the paid commercial business carried out by the naval radio stations the system renders a free service of inestimable value in the daily transmission from Arlington and other stations of the time signals from the naval observatory, thus enabling ships at sea, even though far beyond the range of transmission of their own equipment, to determine their exact chronometer correction. Even sailing vessels which habitually make long voyages, and which have no power with which to operate a radio station of their own may, at trifling expense, be equipped to catch this signal. Our own naval ships have carried it far into the Mediterranean.

"But it is not the seafaring people alone who make use of this time signal. It is attracting great and growing attention throughout the country. Jewelers have installed receiving apparatus for the purpose of getting it, and many amateur receiving stations have been established for the receipt of the time and weather reports. A leading jeweler's trade magazine has informed the department that there are not less than 300 jewelers throughout the country who now receive the time signal by radio, and that the number may be expected to grow to about 3,000. The same journal says that although maritime interests may have been the primary reason for the erection of the Arlington station, it will benefit more people on land than at sea. It is a pleasure to record this evidence of the value of this service, as it is also a matter of pride that the first radio time signals ever sent out were from our own naval stations.

"Another interesting feature of this free radio service which should be of incalculable benefit to shipping is found in the radio compass now under construction at the Fire Island station, near the entrance to New York harbor. This device is intended to send out radio signals of such a character that a vessel in a fog may get a close approximation of her 'bearing,' or compass direction, from the station. By means of observations taken 5 or 10 miles apart it should be possible for the vessel to determine her actual position with fair accuracy. This is the first installation of this type to be made in this country; but a second installation of different type, though answering the same purpose, is projected for the station at Cape Cod. The signals sent out by the radio compass at Fire Island will necessarily be limited as to range, but the Cape Cod installation will allow of a ship calling the station in the usual manner from any distance within the ship's ordinary range and receiving a definite reply as to her bearing from the station. In the case of Fire Island the ship will determine her bearing from the character of signals continuously emitted; for Cape Cod the station determines the bearing of the ship from her calling signal and sends the information back. If these installations prove as successful as anticipated, the radio operators of ships will become an important part of the navigating force.

"One of the most important parts of

the naval system, from a public-service point of view, is the Alaskan branch. On account of their isolation the stations in this division are also the most difficult, though not the most expensive to maintain. Regarded merely as an aid to the important shipping in these waters, their value is very great. In addition they play an important part in the rapidly growing commercial business of inland Alaska. The army cable is the only wire connection between western Alaska and the United States, except the very roundabout route through the Canadian northwest. This cable is laid in difficult bottom and is expensive to maintain. Its operation is frequently interrupted, and at such times the radio stations must be depended upon to handle the traffic. The performance of the radio stations has been very creditable in this work, but it is, of course, out of the question for the present few and rather low-powered stations to handle the entire traffic carried by the cable in the busy season. A medium high-powered station to replace the small station at the Puget Sound navy yard and an additional station of the same type in Alaska are needed additions to the present military system, and such stations would practically solve the question of uninterrupted commercial communication with Alaska, allowing the abandonment of the cable with a great saving to the government and a much cheaper service to the public. With the building of the Alaskan railway the need for additional stations will become more urgent.

"These are features of our radio installation of more or less general interest, but the military feature is one with which the department is more intimately concerned. In this field there has been an enormous advance during the past year, and much of this progress, perhaps the greater part, is due to the original work of the department. Commercial progress in the art has been notable, but it must be remembered that the naval problems in radio work have no parallel in commercial work; that foreign governments guard carefully their own discoveries and developments; and that therefore the navy department is dependent upon its own expert talent for military progress. For this reason it is very gratifying to be able to state that we have kept abreast of the times and have made material progress, and that our equipment is such as will place us in a position at least not inferior to the corresponding service of any foreign government, if we do not, in fact, surpass it.

Plans Have Been Delayed.
The erection of the high-powered stations authorized for San Diego, Honolulu, Guam, Manila and Tutuila has been delayed through inability to acquire title to the private property selected as a site at San Diego. With the present statutory limit as to cost it is impossible to build fully adequate stations unless the cheapest construction is resorted to. An absolutely necessary saving under the circumstances was offered by letting a single contract for the steel towers at San Diego, Honolulu and Manila, but the delay in connection with the transfer of title at San Diego has delayed the whole chain. The title question has, however, just recently been favorably settled, and proposals for the towers, the largest single item of cost of each station, will be advertised this month.

First Tests in March.
The rapid completion of the Panama canal made it necessary to proceed with the canal station independently. Delay has been encouraged there also, owing to delinquency of contractors, but the station is now rapidly approaching completion, and it is expected that the first tests of the installation will be held about March 1. It is interesting to note that at the time the Panama canal station, officially known as the Darien station, was contracted for, the type of equipment selected by the department was practically discredited by a majority of the most eminent technical authorities throughout the world.

System Is Superior.
The navy department, however, through its own investigations and with the cooperation of the progressive American manufacturers of the apparatus, had come into possession of certain data that left no doubt as to the choice to be made. The notable scientific development that has taken place during the last year has confirmed the department's action beyond peradventure. In this one contract the direct saving to the government, due to information resulting from experimental work, was sufficient to cover the total ordinary expenses for experimental work during a period of five years.

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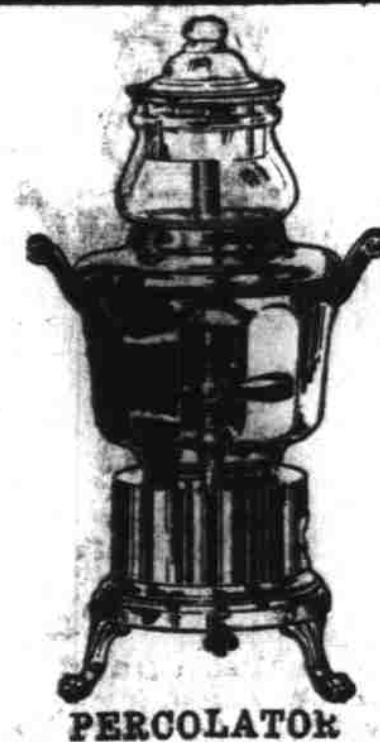
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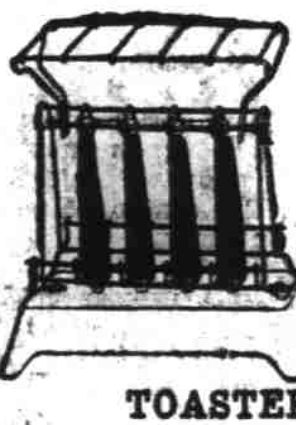
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